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The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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VIVA! PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL RETURNS TO CMA THIS FALL

CLEVELAND — Following its premier season of sell-outs and near sell-outs, the VIVA! Performing Arts Festival returns with another eight critically acclaimed music and dance ensembles for 2000–2001. All of these groups from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are making their Cleveland debuts in this series. Two of the dance ensembles will be making their American premiers. Presented by the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), all eight concerts, October through April, take place at 7:30 p.m. on Fridays in CMA's Gartner Auditorium.

Massoud Saidpour, CMA's artistic director of performing arts, conceived the series last year. "This concert series is unique," he notes. "It features the most comprehensive selection of world music and dance in Cleveland. All of the ensembles are making their U.S. or Cleveland premieres. It also thoroughly reflects the museum's dedication to collecting, showcasing, and preserving art and tradition from various genres. VIVA!'s second season will inspire and dazzle audiences with the artistic richness that world cultures provide."

Music

Launching the VIVA! season on October 20 will be the Cleveland debut of **Bulgari**, veterans of such venues as the Kennedy Center, presenting traditional music and dance from Bulgaria. The 10-member group includes some of the country's finest musicians and dancers, including leading vocalist Radostina Kuneva of the National Radio and Television Ensemble.

On November 17, **Fado: Passion Songs of Portugal**, featuring acclaimed Portuguese vocalist Mísia and her ensemble, will perform musical selections from the genre of *fado* ("fate," songs of yearning and destiny).

French cabaret music will come from the **Paris Combo** on January 12, a quintet that combines late '30s-style cabaret music with a modern sensibility. The young, vibrant Combo is fronted by chanteuse Belle du Berry, accordion player and company lyricist.

On March 30, **The Ensemble Taraf de Haïdouks** ("band of brigands"), a traditional gypsy music ensemble from the small Romanian village of Clejani, will present *Magic Horses and the Evil Eye*. This group — who starred in the lauded film *Latcho Drom* and has

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gone on to record three award-winning albums — is composed of a dozen instrumentalists and singers ranging in age from 20 to 78.

On April 6, **Sufi Devotional Music: the Qawwals of Pakistan**, featuring vocalists Rizwan and Muazzam Ali Khan, will be accompanied by their 11-member ensemble. The two singers are nephews of the late, great singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, who popularized the *qawwali* music form in the West. This group has performed at such venues as the World of Music and Dance (WOMAD) and the Chicago World Music Festival.

Dance

Making their U.S. premier on November 3, **Flamenco de la Luna** (Flamenco of the Moon), featuring renowned flamenco vocalist La Macanita and dancer Juana Amaya, will present a program with their company of gypsy musicians. Amaya has been called "one of the most important *bailaoras* of her time" (*ABC*, Madrid).

On February 16, **The Sublime Art of Cambodian Royal Dances**, performed by elaborately clad female dancers, will relate ideas, stories, or myths from their culture using highly stylized movements. A vocalist, accompanied by an ensemble of musicians, will sing the story.

On March 9, another U.S. premier will be **The Whirling Dervishes of Damascus**, with Shaikh Hamza Shakkur — choirmaster of the Grand Mosque of Damascus — and the *Al-Kindi Ensemble*, who will present an evening of praise for divine love. This tradition of singing and robed dancers was founded by the great Persian poet Rumi, who believed music, dance, and poetry to be a vehicle to spirituality.

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VIVA! Festival subscriptions to all eight concerts, or for either of two four-concert packages, are now available. Charter subscribers receive guaranteed seating priority for these performances and savings up to 50% off the full ticket price. The two four-concert packages are as follows:

<u>Four-Concert Series 1</u>

Bulgari
Fado: Passion Songs of Portugal
The Sublime Art of Cambodian Royal Dances
The Whirling Dervishes of Damascus, Syria

<u>Four-Concert Series 2</u>
Flamenco de la Luna
Paris Combo
Ensemble Taraf de Haïdouks
Sufi Devotional Songs of Pakistan

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Subscription prices are $140 and $126 for all eight concerts; $78 and $69 for four concerts. CMA members receive additional discounts for the eight-concert package.

Single tickets, ranging from $22 to $30, will go on sale to the general public in mid-September. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. in Gartner Auditorium.

VIVA! is sponsored by Barbara S. and Larry J.B. Robinson. For more information about the CMA and its events, call **1-888-CMA-0033** or visit **www.clevelandart.org**.

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